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REMARKS

Claims 4-8 and 12-18 have been canceled.

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the limitations of canceled Claims 17 and 18 respectively to overcome the rejection under 35 USC § 102(b).

New Claims 19-34 have been added. Support for the amendment to Claims 1 and 9 and for new Claims 19-34 may be found in the specification, for example, from page 8, line 5 to page 10, line 13.

Claims 1, 9 and 19-34 remain pending in the application.

By way of this response, Applicant has made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain any outstanding issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the examiner telephone Leo J. Peters at (408)433-4578 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Response to the rejection under 35 USC § 102(b) of Claims 1,4-9 and 12-18

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the limitations of canceled Claims 17 and 18 respectively. Specifically, the claimed invention identifies bottlenecks in an integrated circuit design. As defined in the specification on page 7, lines 16-18, a bottleneck is a node wherein the number of incoming edges does not equal the number of outgoing edges. By assigning a higher priority to reducing path delay in nets that

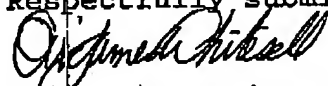Amendment "B" page 8 of 9
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are bottlenecks, the overall path delay in the integrated circuit design may be advantageously reduced more effectively than realized by previous methods. Because the limitations included in amended Claims 1 and 9 were previously claimed in former Claims 17 and 18, no new search or undue burden on the examiner should be required.

In contrast to the claimed method of identifying bottlenecks, *Nag* discloses a slack allocation process for removing overlaps in column 25, lines 62-67 and column 26, lines 1-17 that does not include identifying bottlenecks. Further, *Nag* does not disclose the method of identifying bottlenecks claimed in Claims 19-34. Because *Nag* does not disclose the claimed method that includes identifying bottlenecks or the claimed method of identifying bottlenecks, *Nag* does not anticipate Claims 1, 9 and 19-34 under 35 USC § 102(b).

Applicant respectfully requests examination and favorable reconsideration of Claims 1,9 and 19-34.

No additional fee is believed due for this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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